

# *Constipation Prescription*



*The Constipation Cure Action Plan*

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## THE CONSTIPATION ACTION PLAN

Did you ever think feeling angry and irritable could be a symptom of constipation? A horrible fullness and pressing sharp pains against the bladders can't help but affect your mood. Sometimes you just want everyone to leave you alone and sleep to escape the pain. It is virtually impossible to be constipated and keep a sunny disposition. Follow the steps in this guide to alleviate constipation and lead a happier healthy life.

## WHAT IS CONSTIPATION?

Constipation is the number one gastrointestinal complaint, accounting for 2.5 million doctor visits a year. At some time or another most people will experience constipation, but certain people have a higher tendency. Woman report having constipation more often than men. It is also common for pregnant woman to have constipation due to the pressure put on the intestines by the uterus. The elderly also have higher cases of constipation.

In short, it is having infrequent or difficult evacuation of feces. When food passes through the digestive tract water and nutrients is absorbed into the body. What is left over is solid bodily waste or feces. Muscle contractions then push the stool through the intestines to the colon before exiting the body. Sluggish colon contractions make the stool pass through too slowly, becoming dry, hard and difficult to pass. The resulting abdominal pains and bloat are the constipated feces.

### Do You Have Constipation?

Ask yourself the following questions:

1. Do you regularly have less than three bowel movements a week?
2. Is passing stool difficult on a usual basis?
3. Are your stools often hard and lumpy?
4. Does your body feel blocked or like your bowels are not completely empty?

If you answer, "yes" to any of these questions then this guide is for you.

## THE CAUSES OF CONSTIPATION

Over four million Americans suffer from frequent constipation, so it is not surprising many do not know the causes of constipation. When food is digested water and nutrients are absorbed by the body forming waste products. The resulting stool naturally moves through the intestines. However, if the colon's muscle contractions are sluggish the stool becomes hard, dry and difficult to pass. Following are the main causes of constipation.

- Not Enough Fiber– The most common cause of constipation is diets low in fiber. The typical fast food diet high in cheese, eggs, meat and fat wreak havoc on digestion. The body needs 20 to 35 grams of fiber every day to help it form soft stool. High fiber foods like beans, bran cereal, whole grains, fresh fruit and vegetables must be incorporated into a healthy diet.
- Not Enough Hydrating Fluids– Not drinking enough liquid or having too many beverages like soda pop, alcohol and coffee causes dehydration. Liquids add fluid to the colon making stool softer and bowel movements easier. Instead consistently drink hydrating drinks such as water and juice to avoid constipation.
- Waiting to Have a Bowel Movement– Whether due to an aversion of public bathrooms, a busy schedule or plain laziness skipping number two's can cause constipation. Ignoring the urge to go to the bathroom deadens your ability to know when you need to go. Listen to your body. When it is time to go it's time to go.
- Limited Physical Activity– People who do not get enough exercise, such as the elderly or bedridden patients, becomes constipated. Exercise helps lessen the amount of time it takes for food to move through the large intestine so it does not dry out. Aerobic activity also naturally accelerates the heart rate, helping stimulate intestinal muscle contractions.
- Life Changes– Different life and routine changes make constipation more prevalent. For example, when on vacation your normal diet and physical activity can become disrupted, causing constipation. Pregnant women frequently experience constipation due to hormone changes and the uterine pressure on the intestine. The elderly can have issues from slowing metabolisms, less intestinal activity and muscle tone.

- Laxative Abuse– Self-medicating laxatives are a leading cause of constipation. Initially, laxatives help bowel movements. But once the body becomes used to the extra help, it begins to rely on the medicine. After a while, a higher dose is needed to have a bowel movement causing the body to be reliant on laxatives or be constipated.
- Medications- Besides laxatives, other medications cause constipation. Some of the main culprits are narcotic pain meds, antacids with aluminum and calcium, blood pressure medication, antispasmodics, antiparkinson drugs, antidepressants, iron supplements, diuretics and anticonvulsants.

By knowing causes of constipation you can take steps to avoid the uncomfortable, bloated, aches of constipation.

## CONSTIPATION SYMPTOMS YOU SHOULD KNOW

So, what is really happening in your body when you experience constipation? When your dinner passes through the digestive tract nutrients and water is taken from the food. What is left over is solid bodily waste or stool. Muscle contractions push the stool through the intestines toward the rectum. If the colon absorbs too much water or the muscle contractions are sluggish the stool passes through too slowly and becomes dry and hard. The old stool stops up or constipates your system.

Constipation affects everyone at one time or another. There are a few constipation symptoms to look out for when determining if there is a problem. Abdominal cramping is one of the most obvious signs. The stomach may stick out with abdominal swelling or bloating. There can also be a sensation of fullness where you have a lower appetite. Excessive gas is also a telling sign. If you have less bowel movements than usual, that is also an early indication of constipation. Surprisingly, flu symptoms such as nausea, fatigue and fever can also be a result of constipation. Emotional stress and anxiety are mood changes that can take place.

Some symptoms of constipation are evidence of a complication. When normal pushing of the colon cannot expel the stool it is called fecal impaction. This impaction is fixed with a little mineral oil swallowed or via an enema. A doctor can then simply remove the softened stool by hand. Bright red streaks on the stool are a sign of tears in the skin around the anus. This is a sign of hemorrhoids caused by straining to pass hard stool. Ice packs, warm tub baths and creams can alleviate the problem. Straining can also result in a small amount of the intestinal lining to push out of the anus opening. This condition called rectal prolapse often causes fear and embarrassment. However, the prolapse can correct itself once the constipation and straining stops. Chronic prolapse may require surgery to strengthen or repair the anal lining.

In most cases, constipation symptoms are a discomfort treated at home. However, the following symptoms with constipation it is an indication of a life threatening condition.

- Black, bloody stool
- Passing out, dizziness or changes of alertness
- Fever higher than 101 degrees Fahrenheit
- Rapid heart rate
- Shortness of breath, wheezing or choking
- Board like, rigid abdomen
- Yellow eye whites and tinged to the skin.

If any of the above constipation symptoms occur immediately call 911

## REMEDIES FOR CONSTIPATION

Constipation is one of the most common medical complaints despite the many remedies for constipation. Feeling bloated, and irritable are all signs of constipation. There are several effective treatments to help you regain your strength and energy.

### Exercise and Diet

- Eat Fiber- A high fiber diet is usually what is needed to treat constipation. A combination of soluble and insoluble fiber found in is what the body needs to form soft bulky stool. You should consume least 30-35 grams of fiber a day. Limit



processed foods, and those high in fat such as cheese and meat, and replace with beans, bran fruits and vegetables

- Hydrate- Drinking water is also important to keep things moving. Women need about eight cups and men need approximately 12 cups of water a day. Increase the intake of water and juice for a significant difference in hydration. Avoid beverages high in caffeine, like soda and coffee, which cause dehydration.
- Physical Activity- Daily exercise goes a long way to keeping your digestion on track. It naturally stimulates muscle contractions and helps the large intestine move waste through the body faster, preventing a hard dry blockage.

## Supplements

- Aloe Vera – Aloe vera is a leafy succulent plant that grows in hot drained soils. Traditionally, dried latex from the lining of the aloe vera leaf is used as an oral laxative. The anthraquinone glycosides in the latex are scientifically proven to have laxative properties.
- Rhubarb– For thousands of years Chinese herbalists have relied on rhubarb rhizomes for medicinal purposes. European herbalists also recommend rhubarb due to its anthraquinone compounds that irritate the colon and stimulate bowel movements. The root also has tannins believed to lessen colon inflammation.
- Phosphorus– Phosphorus is a mineral found in many foods. It is a FDA labeled laxative approved for adults and children. One of the proven constipation remedies, sodium phosphate is taken orally and as an enema to prepare patients for surgery.
- Psyllium– With a high level of soluble dietary fiber, Psyllium is the chief ingredient in bulk laxatives such as Serutan and Metamucil. The natural laxative helps clean and clear the intestinal track.

## Alternative Therapies

- Massage– Massage is using pressure to manipulate muscles. It's been practiced for thousands of years in different cultures. An abdominal massage stimulates peristalsis waves in the colon. A three to five minute massage will start stagnant fecal matter moving again.

- Acupressure– Acupressure is a touch therapy using the principles of acupuncture. Instead of sticking points with needles, is used. Tapping on acupressure points on the arm, trunk and legs relieves constipation.
- Aromatherapy– Aromatherapy uses essential oils from plants to enhance well-being. Basil, lavender, rose and myrrh essential oil strengthens the digestive system. Essential oils of basil, lavender, myrrh, and rose strengthen the digestive system. An aromatic bath with five drops of oil helps ease and counteract constipation.

## THE BEST FOODS FOR CONSTIPATION

Eating the right foods for constipation can be the best way to stop irritable, bloated feelings caused by intestinal blockage causes. Almost all Americans suffer some form of constipation in their lifetime. Though it is a very common condition, it is easily treated with the proper diet. The American Dietetic Association suggests eating 20 to 35 grams of fiber a day. The average American only eats five to fourteen grams daily. There are plenty of readily available foods for constipation relief.

- Beans- Beans The latest dietary guidelines recommend we triple our intake from one to three cups per week. Just one cup of cooked beans provides 12 grams of fiber.

Nutritious choices are split peas, lentils, black beans, kidney beans, lima beans, and pinto beans.

- Whole Grains- The healthiest kinds of grains are whole grains since the essential parts of the natural occurring nutrients are intact. Whole grains are foods that do not have the bran and germs milled out. Whole grains to consume include: muesli, whole wheat, rye, amaranth, barley, buckwheat, corn, millet, oats and quinoa.

- Unprocessed Wheat Bran- Wheat bran is the outermost layer of the wheat berry and is one of the world's richest forms of fiber. One cup of wheat bran provides about 99 percent of the recommended daily intake of fiber making it a great constipation cure. Add unprocessed wheat bran to baked goods for fiber and flavor. Truly raw, "unprocessed" wheat bran is not toasted and must be stored in the refrigerator. You can buy it at specialty stores and online.

- Unrefined Breakfast Cereals- In their natural state, breakfast cereal is an important source of dietary fiber. Oatmeal and whole wheat hot cereal are a nutritious way to start the morning. For cold cereals, look for varieties with the first ingredient listed as whole grain, whole wheat, oats, corn or bran, containing two grams of fiber per serving.
- Dried Fruit- Dried fruits are effective in pushing food out and stopping constipation. The skin on dried fruits contains fiber the body cannot breakdown plus sugars that cause the colon to push out the stool. Eat prunes apricots, figs, cranberries, and apples for the perfect foods for constipation snack.
- Fresh Fruit- Fresh fruit is nature's laxatives that gently relieve constipation. All fruits are easy to absorb and digest, however the top fruits for constipation are berries, papaya, oranges, apples, bananas and pears. Just one cup of blueberries contains 3.6 grams of fiber.
- Vegetables- Vegetables are full of fiber and prevent constipation. All veggies are beneficial, but raw vegetables help more than cooked. Even cooked, one cup of broccoli contains 5.2 gram of fiber. Vegetables such as cauliflower, okra and spinach have the added benefit of lubricating the intestines easing bowel movements.

Gradually add foods for constipation to your diet while limiting high fat foods like cheese, meat, ice cream and processed food. When increasing fiber it is important to drink the recommended 8 to 10 cups of water a day to aid digestion.

## NEXT STEPS

Put this action plan in use to relieve constipation. For more help with constipation remedies, there are many diet books and supplements on the market. Start making small changes today for a healthier tomorrow.